

Who Cares? - Making it Relevant

Lesson

This lesson will help students observe and incorporate *relevance* in their science journalism articles.

“Information is made relevant to readers. Reported findings are linked to local concerns and new applications are considered. . . Readers’ implied questions are recognized and answered.”

SciJourn Standards for Scientific Literacy

Objective: Students will recognize and include a degree of relevance in science journalism articles.

Materials: *Ask me if I care?*

relevance strips (cut into individual strips)

lack of relevance strips (cut into individual strips)

Time: approximately 15-20 minutes

Getting Started

Discuss with students what it is that makes an article interesting for them. Introduce the term *relevance* by stating that it is how an article connects with an audience - that which makes an article interesting for a particular group of readers.

Addressing the Topic

Distribute *Ask me if I care?* Read the introduction aloud and invite students to fill in the blanks. (The scrambled letters are provided to assist.) Then read the directions to the class.

Provide time for students to individually read the article descriptions and to rate each on a scale from 1 to 5.

As students complete their ratings, have them partner with a neighbor. Did they select the same descriptions for #1 and #5? If so, have them share reasons. If not, ask them to try to convince one another to alter their choices.

During a class discussion tally how many students chose article A as their #1, article B as #1, and so on. Invite students to share reasons for their selections. List reasons on board for later use. (Add to list if students do not include things like: *is interesting to me because I am a student, I have a cell*

phone, I text a lot, my friends and I always use our cell phones, without my cell phone I would feel lost, etc.)

Partner students and randomly distribute pre-cut relevance and lack of relevance strips - 2 to each pair.

Have the students read their strips and quietly discuss their response. You may want to have them record their ideas. Point out the list on the board that may help with this activity.

Go around the room and ask each student pair to select one strip, read it to the class, and share with the class their response. If time, go around the class again and discuss second strip.

If time, discuss the “**Think about . . .**” at the bottom of *Ask me if I care?* This connects *relevancy* with *information is up-to-date*.

Follow-up

Exit write - Have students write several sentences about the importance of making science articles relevant to the audience.

Ask me if I care?

Name _____

The audience of your article will only become readers if they care about the topic - if the article is *relevant* to them. Relevance is a significant or logical

_____ (t i n c e n o c o n) between your topic and your
_____ (d a n c e u i e).

Look at the article descriptions below. Which articles would you select to read? For each description ask, "Why do I care?". Then, rate them on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being the article you would most like to read and 5 the article you would least like to read - the article you least care about.

____ARTICLE A

Cell phones: everyone seems to have one. In this article read about the early development of cell phones and how they work. See how improvements in reception improve cell phone performance, including texting.

____ARTICLE B

Cell phones: nearly all drivers seem to be using them. In this article read about the hazards of cell phone use while driving - what makes it so dangerous, especially texting and driving.

____ARTICLE C

Cell phones: nearly all students seem to have one. In this article read about the connections students make with their cell phones at school and how having one has become a necessity - for talking, texting, and more.

____ARTICLE D

Cell phones: you think talking and texting are great, wait until you see what's next! In this article read about innovations in cell phone technology.

____ARTICLE E

Cell phones: older Americans are finding greater security by having their cell phones handy. In this article read how the elderly have accepted cell phone technology as a means to be safer and more secure, both in their homes and while traveling.

Look at your ratings. Why did you select them in the order you did?
Some ideas:

Think about the article you selected as your #1 choice. Imagine a possible news hook that might make it up-to-date *and* relevant.

Relevancy Strips

What could be included in an article about TRASH to make it relevant for other students?

What could be included in an article about SNACKS to make it relevant for other students?

What could be included in an article about VIRUSES to make it relevant for other students?

What could be included in an article about SUNSCREEN to make it relevant for other students?

What could be included in an article about ENERGY CONSERVATION to make it relevant to other students?

What could be included in an article about ENERGY DRINKS to make it relevant to other students?

Relevancy Strips

What could be included in an article about GLOBAL WARMING to make it relevant for other students?

What could be included in an article about ELECTRONIC WASTE to make it relevant for other students?

What could be included in an article about RECYCLING to make it relevant for other students?

What could be included in an article about WEATHER to make it relevant for other students?

**What could be included in an article about N1H1 to make it relevant for other students?
What could be included in an article about ASTEROIDS to make it relevant for other students?**

Describe an article about TRASH that would be totally *not* relevant for other students?

Describe an article about SNACKS that would be totally *not* relevant for other students?

Describe an article about VIRUSES that would be totally *not* relevant for other students?

Describe an article about SUNSCREEN that would be totally *not* relevant for other students?

Describe an article about ENERGY CONSERVATION that would be totally *not* relevant for other students?

Describe an article about ENERGY DRINKS that would be totally *not* relevant for other students?

Describe an article about GLOBAL WARMING that would be totally *not* relevant for other students?

Describe an article about ELECTRONIC WASTE that would be totally *not* relevant for other students?

Describe an article about RECYCLING that would be totally *not* relevant for other students?

Describe an article about WEATHER that would be totally *not* relevant for other students?

Describe an article about N1H1 that would be totally *not* relevant for other students?

Describe an article about ASTEROIDS that would be totally *not* relevant for other students?